2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter01

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 39:53)

Chapter 1 The Flowering of Human Consciousness Evocation Earth, 114 million years ago, one morning just after sunrise. The first flower ever to appear on the planet opens up to receive the rays of the sun. Prior to this momentous event that heralds an evolutionary transformation in the life of plants, the planet had already been covered in vegetation for millions of years.

The first flower probably did not survive for long, and flowers must have remained rare and isolated phenomena, since conditions were most likely not yet favourable for widespread flowering to occur. One day, however, the critical threshold was reached, and suddenly there would have been an explosion of colour and scent all over the planet. If a perceiving consciousness had been there to witness it.

Much later, those delicate and fragrant beings we call flowers would come to play an essential part in the evolution of consciousness of another species. Humans would increasingly be drawn to and fascinated by them. As the consciousness of human beings developed, flowers were most likely the first thing they came to value which had no utilitarian purpose for them, that is to say, was not linked in some way to survival.

They provided inspiration to countless artists, poets, and mystics. Jesus tells us to contemplate the flowers and learn from them how to live. The Buddha is said to have given a silent sermon once, during which he held up a flower and gazed at it.

After a while, one of those present, a monk called Mahakasyapa, began to smile. He is said to have been the only one who had understood the sermon. According to legend, that smile, that is to say, realisation, was handed down by twenty-eight successive masters, and much later became the origin of Zen.

Seeing beauty in a flower could awaken humans, however briefly, to the beauty that is an essential part of their own innermost being, their true nature. The first recognition of beauty was one of the most significant events in the evolution of human consciousness. The feelings of joy and love are intrinsically connected to that recognition.

Without fully realising it, flowers would become for us an expression in form of that which is most high, most sacred, and ultimately formless within ourselves. Flowers, more fleeting, more ethereal, and more delicate than the plants out of which they emerged, would become like messengers from another realm, like a bridge between the world of physical forms and the formless. They not only had a scent that was delicate and pleasing to humans, but also brought a fragrance from the realm of spirit.

Using the word enlightenment in a wider sense than the conventionally accepted one, we could look upon flowers as the enlightenment of plants. Any life-form in any realm, mineral, vegetable, animal, or human, can be said to undergo enlightenment. It is, however, an extremely rare occurrence, since it is more than an evolutionary progression.

It also implies a discontinuity in its development, a leap to an entirely different level of being, and, most important, a lessening of materiality. What could be heavier and more impenetrable than a rock, the densest of all forms? And yet, some rocks undergo a change in their molecular structure, turn into crystals, and so become transparent to the light.

Some carbons, under inconceivable heat and pressure, turn into diamonds, and some heavy minerals into other precious stones. Most crawling reptilians, the most earthbound of all creatures, have remained unchanged for millions of years. Some, however, grew feathers and wings and turned into birds, thus defying the force of gravity that had held them for so long.

They did not become better at crawling or walking, but transcended crawling and walking entirely. Since time immemorial, flowers, crystals, precious stones, and birds have held special significance for the human spirit. Like all life-forms, they are, of course, temporary manifestations of the underlying one life, one consciousness.

Their special significance, and the reason why humans feel such fascination for and affinity with them, can be attributed to their ethereal quality. Once there is a certain degree of presence, of still and alert attention in human beings' perceptions, they can sense the divine life-essence, the one indwelling consciousness or spirit in every creature, every life-form, recognize it as one with their own essence, and so love it as themselves. Until this happens, however, most humans see only the outer forms, unaware of the inner essence, just as they are unaware of their own essence and identify only with their own physical and psychological form.

Crystal, precious stone, or bird, however, even someone with little or no presence can occasionally sense that there is more there than the mere physical existence of that form, without knowing that this is the reason why he or she is drawn towards it, feels an affinity with it. Because of its ethereal nature, its form obscures the indwelling spirit to a lesser degree than is the case with other life-forms. The exception to this are all newborn life-forms, babies, puppies, kittens, lambs, and so on.

They are fragile, delicate, not yet firmly established in materiality. An innocence, a sweetness and beauty that are not of this world still shine through them. They delight even relatively insensitive humans.

So when you are alert and contemplate a flower, crystal, or bird, without naming it

mentally, it becomes a window for you into the formless. There is an inner opening, however slight, into the realm of spirit. This is why these three enlightened life-forms have played such an important part in the evolution of human consciousness since ancient times.

Why, for example, the jewel in the lotus flower is a central symbol of Buddhism, and a white bird, the dove, signifies the Holy Spirit in Christianity. They have been preparing the ground for a more profound shift in planetary consciousness that is destined to take place in the human species. This is the spiritual awakening that we are beginning to witness now.

The purpose of this book. Is humanity ready for a transformation of consciousness, an inner flowering so radical and profound that compared to it the flowering of plants, no matter how beautiful, is only a pale reflection? Can human beings lose the density of their conditioned mind structures and become like crystals or precious stones, so to speak, transparent to the light of consciousness?

Can they defy the gravitational pull of materialism and materiality and rise above identification with form which keeps the ego in place and condemns them to imprisonment within their own personality? The possibility of such a transformation has been the central message of the great wisdom teachings of humankind. The messengers, Buddha, Jesus and others, not all of them known, were humanity's early flowers.

They were precursors, rare and precious beings. A widespread flowering was not yet possible at that time, and their message became largely misunderstood and often greatly distorted. It certainly did not transform human behavior, except in a small minority of people.

Is humanity more ready now than at the time of those early teachers? Why should this be so? What can you do, if anything, to bring about or accelerate this inner shift?

What is it that characterizes the old egoic state of consciousness, and by what science is the new emerging consciousness recognized? These and other essential questions will be addressed in this book. More important, this book itself is a transformational device that has come out of the arising new consciousness.

The ideas and concepts presented here may be important, but they are secondary. They are no more than signposts pointing towards awakening. As you read, a shift takes place within you.

This book's main purpose is not to add new information or beliefs to your mind or to try to convince you of anything, but to bring about a shift in consciousness, that is to say, to awaken. In that sense, this book is not interesting. Interesting means you can keep your

distance, play around with ideas and concepts in your mind, agree or disagree.

This book is about you. It will change your state of consciousness, or it will be meaningless. It can only awaken those who are ready.

Not everyone is ready yet, but many are, and with each person who awakens, the momentum in the collective consciousness grows, and it becomes easier for others. If you don't know what awakening means, read on. Only by awakening can you know the true meaning of that word.

A glimpse is enough to initiate the awakening process, which is irreversible. For some, that glimpse will come while reading this book. For many others who may not even have realized it, the process has already begun.

This book will help them recognize it. For some, it may have begun through loss or suffering. For others, through coming into contact with a spiritual teacher or teaching, through reading The Power of Now, or some other spiritually alive and therefore transformational book, or any combination of the above.

If the awakening process has begun in you, the reading of this book will accelerate and intensify it. The beginning is the recognition of the unawakened you, the ego as it thinks, speaks and acts, as well as the recognition of the collectively conditioned mental processes that perpetuate the unawakened state. This is why this book shows the main aspects of the ego and how they operate in the individual as well as in the collective.

This is important for two related reasons. The first is that unless you know the basic mechanics behind the workings of the ego, you won't recognize it, and it will trick you into identifying with it again and again. This means it takes you over, an imposter pretending to be you.

The second reason is that the act of recognition itself is one of the ways in which awakening happens. When you recognize the unconsciousness in you, that which makes the recognition possible is the arising consciousness, is awakening. You cannot fight against the ego and win, just as you cannot fight against darkness.

The light of consciousness is all that is necessary. You are that light, our inherited dysfunction. If we look more deeply into humanity's ancient religions and spiritual traditions, we will find that underneath the many surface differences there are two core insights that most of them agree on.

The words they use to describe those insights differ, yet they all point to a twofold fundamental truth. The first part of this truth is the realization that the normal state of mind of most human beings contains a strong element of what we might call dysfunction or even madness. Certain teachings at the heart of Hinduism perhaps come closest to seeing this dysfunction as a form of collective mental illness.

They call it Maya, the veil of delusion. Ramana Maharshi, one of the greatest Indian sages, bluntly states, The mind is Maya. Buddhism uses different terms.

According to the Buddha, the human mind in its normal state generates dukkha, which can be translated as suffering, unsatisfactoriness or just plain misery. He sees it as a characteristic of the human condition. Wherever you go, whatever you do, says the Buddha, you will encounter dukkha, and it will manifest in every situation sooner or later.

According to Christian teachings, the normal collective state of humanity is one of original sin. Sin is a word that has been greatly misunderstood and misinterpreted. Literally translated from the ancient Greek in which the New Testament was written, to sin means to miss the mark.

As an archer who misses the target, so to sin means to miss the point of human existence. It means to live unskillfully, blindly, and thus to suffer and cause suffering. Again, the term, stripped of its cultural baggage and misinterpretations, points to the dysfunction inherent in the human condition.

The achievements of humanity are impressive and undeniable. We have created sublime works of music, literature, painting, architecture and sculpture. More recently, science and technology have brought about radical changes in the way we live and have enabled us to do and create things that would have been considered miraculous even 200 years ago.

No doubt, the human mind is highly intelligent. Yet its very intelligence is tainted by madness. Science and technology have magnified the destructive impact that the dysfunction of the human mind has upon the planet, other life-forms, and upon humans themselves.

That is why the history of the 20th century is where that dysfunction, that collective insanity, can be most clearly recognized. A further factor is that this dysfunction is actually intensifying and accelerating. The First World War broke out in 1914.

Destructive and cruel wars, motivated by fear, greed, and the desire for power, had been common occurrences throughout human history, as had slavery, torture, and widespread violence inflicted for religious and ideological reasons. Humans suffered more at the hands of each other than through natural disasters. By the year 1914, however, the highly intelligent human mind had invented not only the internal combustion engine, but also bombs, machine guns, submarines, flamethrowers, and poison gas.

Intelligence in the service of madness. In static trench warfare in France and Belgium, millions of men perished to gain a few miles of mud. When the war was over in 1918, the survivors looked in horror and incomprehension upon the devastation left behind.

Ten million human beings killed, and many more maimed or disfigured. Never before had

human madness been so destructive in its effect, so clearly visible. Little did they know that this was only the beginning.

The number of people who died a violent death at the hand of their fellow humans would rise to more than one hundred million. They died not only through wars between nations, but also through mass exterminations and genocide, such as the murder of twenty million class enemies, spies, and traitors in the Soviet Union under Stalin, or the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. They also died in countless smaller internal conflicts, such as the Spanish Civil War, or during the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, when a quarter of that country's population was murdered.

We only need to watch the daily news on television to realize that the madness has not debated, that it is continuing into the 21st century. Another aspect of the collective dysfunction of the human mind is the unprecedented violence that humans are inflicting on other life-forms and the planet itself. The destruction of oxygen-producing forests and other plant and animal life, ill-treatment of animals in factory farms, and poisoning of rivers, oceans, and air.

Driven by greed, ignorant of their connectedness to the whole, humans persist in behavior that, if continued unchecked, can only result in their own destruction. The collective manifestations of the insanity that lies at the heart of the human condition constitute the greater part of human history. It is, to a large extent, a history of madness.

If the history of humanity were the clinical case history of a single human being, the diagnosis would have to be chronic paranoid delusions, a pathological propensity to commit murder and acts of extreme violence and cruelty against his perceived enemies, his own unconsciousness projected outward, criminally insane, with a few brief lucid intervals. Fear, greed, and the desire for power are the psychological motivating forces, not only behind warfare and violence between nations, tribes, religions, and ideologies, but also the cause of incessant conflict in personal relationships. They bring about a distortion in your perception of other people and yourself.

Through them, you misinterpret every situation, leading to misguided action designed to rid you of fear and satisfy your need for more, a bottomless hole that can never be filled. It is important to realize, however, that fear, greed, and the desire for power are not the dysfunctions that we are speaking of, but are themselves created by the dysfunction, which is a deep-seated collective delusion that lies within the mind of each human being. A number of spiritual teachings tell us to let go of fear and desire.

But those spiritual practices are usually unsuccessful. They haven't gone to the root of the dysfunction. Fear, greed, and desire for power are not the ultimate causal factors.

Trying to become a good or better human being sounds like a commendable and high-

minded thing to do, yet it is an endeavor you cannot ultimately succeed in unless there is a shift in consciousness. This is because it is still part of the same dysfunction, a more subtle and rarified form of self-enhancement, of desire for more, and a strengthening of one's conceptual identity, one's self-image. You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge.

But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness. The history of communism, originally inspired by noble ideals, clearly illustrates what happens when people attempt to change external reality, create a new earth, without any prior change in their inner reality, their state of consciousness. They make plans without taking into account the blueprint for dysfunction that every human being carries within, the ego, the arising new consciousness.

Most ancient religions and spiritual traditions share the common insight that our normal state of mind is marred by a fundamental defect. However, out of this insight into the nature of the human condition, we may call it the bad news, arises a second insight, the good news of the possibility of a radical transformation of human consciousness. In Hindu teachings, and sometimes in Buddhism also, this transformation is called enlightenment.

In the teachings of Jesus, it is salvation, and in Buddhism it is the end of suffering. Liberation and awakening are other terms used to describe this transformation. The greatest achievement of humanity is not its works of art, science or technology, but the recognition of its own dysfunction, its own madness.

In the distant past, this recognition already came to a few individuals. A man called Gautama Siddhartha, who lived 2600 years ago in India, was perhaps the first who saw it with absolute clarity. Later, the title Buddha was conferred upon him.

Buddha means the awakened one. At about the same time, another of humanity's early awakened teachers emerged in China. His name was Lao Tzu.

He left a record of his teachings in the form of one of the most profound spiritual books ever written, the Tao Te Ching. Of course, the arising of sanity, the beginning of healing and transcendence. A new dimension of consciousness had begun to emerge on the planet, a first tentative flowering.

Those rare individuals then spoke to their contemporaries. They spoke of sin, of suffering, of delusion. They said, They then pointed to the possibility of awakening from the collective nightmare of normal human existence.

They showed the way. The world was not yet ready for them, and yet they were a vital and necessary part of human awakening. Inevitably, they were mostly misunderstood by

their contemporaries, as well as by subsequent generations.

Their teachings, although both simple and powerful, became distorted and misinterpreted, in some cases even as they were recorded in writing by their disciples. Over the centuries, many things were added that had nothing to do with the original teachings, but were reflections of a fundamental misunderstanding. Some of the teachers were ridiculed, reviled or killed.

Others came to be worshipped as gods. Teachings that pointed the way beyond the dysfunction of the human mind, the way out of the collective insanity, were distorted and became themselves part of the insanity. And so religions, to a large extent, became divisive rather than unifying forces.

Instead of bringing about an ending of violence and hatred, through the realization of the fundamental oneness of all life, they brought more violence and hatred, more divisions between people, as well as between different religions, and even within the same religion. They became ideologies, belief systems people could identify with and so use them to enhance their false sense of self. Through them, they could make themselves right and others wrong, and thus define their identity through their enemies, the others, the non-believers or wrong-believers, who not infrequently they saw themselves justified in killing.

Man made God in his own image. The eternal, the infinite and unnameable was reduced to a mental idol that you had to believe in and worship as my God or our God. And yet, and yet, in spite of all the insane deeds perpetrated in the name of religion, the truth to which they point still shines at their core.

It still shines, however dimly, through layers upon layers of distortion and misinterpretation. It is unlikely, however, that you will be able to perceive it there unless you have at least already had glimpses of that truth within yourself. Throughout history, there have always been rare individuals who experienced a shift in consciousness and so realized within themselves that towards which all religions point.

To describe that non-conceptual truth, they then used the conceptual framework of their own religions. Through some of those men and women, schools or movements developed within all major religions that represented not only a rediscovery, but in some cases an intensification of the light of the original teaching. This is how Gnosticism and Mysticism came into existence in early and medieval Christianity.

Sufism in the Islamic religion. Hasidism and Kambala in Judaism. Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism.

Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism. Most of these schools were iconoclastic. They did away with layers upon layers of deadening conceptualization and mental belief structures.

And for this reason, most of them were viewed with suspicion and often hostility by the established religious hierarchies. Unlike mainstream religion, their teachings emphasized realization and inner transformation. It is through those esoteric schools or movements that the major religions regained the transformative power of the original teachings, although in most cases only a small minority of people had access to them.

Their numbers were never large enough to have any significant impact on the deep collective unconsciousness of the majority. Over time, some of those schools themselves became too rigidly formalized or conceptualized to remain effective. Religion.

What is the role of the established religions in the arising of the new consciousness? Many people are already aware of the difference between spirituality and religion. They realize that having a belief system, a set of thoughts that you regard as the absolute truth, does not make you spiritual no matter what the nature of those beliefs is.

In fact, the more you make your thoughts, your beliefs, into your identity, the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself. Many religious people are stuck at that level. They equate truth with thought, and as they are completely identified with thought, their mind, they claim to be in sole possession of the truth in an unconscious attempt to protect their identity.

They don't realize the limitations of thought. Unless you believe, think, exactly as they do, you are wrong in their eyes, and in the not-too-distant past they would have felt justified in killing you for that. And some still do, even now.

The new spirituality, the transformation of consciousness, is arising to a large extent outside of the structures of the existing institutionalized religions. There were always pockets of spirituality even in mind-dominated religions, although the institutionalized hierarchies felt threatened by them and often tried to suppress them. A large-scale opening of spirituality outside of the religious structures is an entirely new development.

In the past, this would have been inconceivable, especially in the West, the most mind-dominated of all cultures, where the Christian church had a virtual franchise on spirituality. You couldn't just stand up and give a spiritual talk or publish a spiritual book unless you were sanctioned by the church, and if you were not, they would quickly silence you. But now, even within certain churches and religions, there are signs of change.

It is heart-warming, and one is grateful for even the slightest signs of openness, such as Pope John Paul II visiting a mosque as well as a synagogue. Partly as a result of the spiritual teachings that have arisen outside the established religions, but also due to an influx of the ancient Eastern wisdom teachings, a growing number of followers of traditional religions are able to let go of identification with form, dogma and rigid belief systems and discover the original depths that is hidden within their own spiritual

tradition at the same time as they discover the depths within themselves. They realize that how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe but everything to do with your state of consciousness. This, in turn, determines how you act in the world and interact with others.

Those unable to look beyond form become even more deeply entrenched in their beliefs, that is to say, in their mind. We are witnessing not only an unprecedented influx of consciousness at this time, but also an entrenchment and intensification of the ego. Some religious institutions will be open to the new consciousness, others will harden their doctrinal positions and become part of all those other man-made structures through which the collective ego will defend itself and fight back.

Some churches, sects, cults or religious movements are basically collective egoic entities, as rigidly identified with their mental positions as the followers of any political ideology which is close to any alternative interpretation of reality. But the ego is destined to dissolve and all its ossified structures, whether they be religious or other institutions, corporations or governments, will disintegrate from within, no matter how deeply entrenched they appear to be. The most rigid structures, the most impervious to change, will collapse first.

This has already happened in the case of Soviet Communism. How deeply entrenched, how solid and monolithic it appeared, and yet within a few years it disintegrated from within. No one foresaw this.

All were taken by surprise. There are many more such surprises in store for us. The urgency of transformation.

When faced with a radical crisis, when the old way of being in the world, of interacting with each other and with the realm of nature doesn't work anymore, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems, an individual life-form or species will either die or become extinct or rise above the limitations of its condition through an evolutionary leap. It is believed that the life-forms on this planet first evolved in the sea. When there were no animals yet to be found on land, the sea was already teeming with life.

Then, at some point, one of the sea creatures must have started to venture onto dry land. It would perhaps crawl a few inches at first, then, exhausted by the enormous gravitational pull of the planet, it would return to the water where gravity is almost non-existent and where it could live with much greater ease. And then it tried again and again and again, and much later would adapt to life on land, grow feet instead of fins, develop lungs instead of gills.

It seems unlikely that a species would venture into such an alien environment and undergo an evolutionary transformation unless it was compelled to do so by some crisis

situation. There may have been a large sea area that got cut off from the main ocean when the water gradually receded over thousands of years, forcing fishes to leave the habitat and evolve. A radical crisis that threatens our very survival.

This is humanity's challenge now. The dysfunction of the egoic human mind, recognized already more than 2,500 years ago by the ancient wisdom teachers and now magnified through science and technology, is for the first time threatening the survival of the planet. Until very recently, the transformation of human consciousness, also pointed to by the ancient teachers, was no more than a possibility, realized by a few rare individuals here and there, irrespective of cultural or religious background.

A widespread flowering of human consciousness did not happen because it was not yet imperative. A significant portion of the earth's population will soon recognize, if they haven't already done so, that humanity is now faced with a stark choice. Evolve or die.

A still relatively small but rapidly growing percentage of humanity is already experiencing within themselves the breakup of the old egoic mind patterns and the emergence of a new dimension of consciousness. What is arising now is not a new belief system, a new religion, spiritual ideology or mythology. We are coming to the end not only of mythologies but also of ideologies and belief systems.

The change goes deeper than the content of your mind, deeper than your thoughts. In fact, at the heart of the new consciousness lies the transcendence of thought, the newfound ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself that is infinitely more vast than thought. You then no longer derive your identity, your sense of who you are, from the incessant stream of thinking that in the old consciousness you take to be yourself.

What a liberation to realize that the voice in my head is not who I am. Who am I then? The one who sees that.

The awareness that is prior to thought, the space in which the thought or the emotion or sense perception happens. Ego is no more than this, identification with form, which primarily means thought forms. If evil has any reality, and it has a relative, not an absolute reality, this is also its definition, complete identification with form, physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms.

This results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every other as well as with the source. This forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, delusion. When this delusion of utter separateness underlies and governs whatever I think, say and do, what kind of world do I create?

To find the answer to this, observe how humans relate to each other, read a history book or watch the news on television tonight. If the structures of the human mind remain

unchanged, we will always end up recreating fundamentally the same world, the same evils, the same dysfunction, a new heaven and a new earth. The inspiration for the title of this book came from a Bible prophecy that seems more applicable now than at any other time in human history.

It occurs in both the Old and the New Testament and speaks of the collapse of the existing world order and the arising of a new heaven and a new earth. We need to understand here that heaven is not a location but refers to the inner realm of consciousness. This is the esoteric meaning of the word and this is also its meaning in the teachings of Jesus.

Earth, on the other hand, is the outer manifestation in form which is always a reflection of the inner. Collective human consciousness and life on our planet are intrinsically connected. A new heaven is the emergence of a transformed state of human consciousness and a new earth is its reflection in the physical realm.

Since human life and human consciousness are intrinsically one with the life of the planet, as the old consciousness dissolves, there are bound to be synchronistic geographic and climatic natural upheavals in many parts of the planet, some of which we are already witnessing now.

[Speaker 2] (39:57 - 42:11)

Welcome to our very first live worldwide interactive event. We are here tonight breaking new ground. Nothing like this has ever been attempted before.

Right now, you all are online with me from every corner on our planet, places like Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ecuador, Finland, Hong Kong, China, India, Zimbabwe, Australia, Canada, the UK, and the rest of Europe, along with, of course, all 50 states here in our United States of America. Over 139 countries are represented in our class tonight. Welcome to you all.

So I want to get started. This is the most exciting thing I've ever done. I've done a lot of things in my life, but I am most proud of the fact that all of you have joined us in this global community to talk about what I believe is one of the most important subjects and presented by one of the most important books of our time, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose.

I don't think there's anything more important than awakening and also knowing what your purpose is. And for the next 10 weeks, author and spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle and I will be here in our virtual classroom here on Oprah.com. Every Monday, 8 p.m., beyond time for class, 8 p.m. Central, we're going to be answering your emails. We're going to be having a conversation about each chapter and taking your calls from around the world and your emails from around the world and seeing some of you around the

world through our Skype phones. I'm sure you've already noticed that you can type in your questions on the right side of your screen and send that to us instantly. And we will, you know, we have a whole team of people here who are ready, waiting, standing by to take your calls and emails.

And, of course, I'm honored to introduce the author of this great book, A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (42:12 - 42:14)

Thank you. Yeah. Good to be here.

[Speaker 2] (42:14 - 44:35)

How exciting this is. Yeah. It's very good.

Okay, so let's get class started. The way we're going to work the class is that we will have a conversation and take your calls and your questions whenever we feel appropriate. First of all, I wanted to just talk to you about how this book came to you.

I was introduced to this book several months ago when I was interviewing Eckhart Tolle on XM Radio. I have a show on XM Radio. Not many people know about it, but it's called The Soul Series.

And on that show, I get to talk to anybody I choose, and I choose to speak to people who represent this kind of thinking, this genre of spirituality, and we talk about the soul. So I was interviewing Eckhart Tolle several months ago about his book, The Power of Now, because that's really all I knew about Eckhart Tolle was The Power of Now. I call you the father of now, The Power of Now, which that book was a life-changing book for me, given to me many years ago, about eight years ago, by Meg Ryan, who was on the show.

And the producer, Corny, came in and said, well, as I was preparing, she said, there's this other book he's written called A New Earth. And I just had time to thumb through A New Earth and not really give it its due, because I was focused on reading The Power of Now and talking to you about that. And after our interview, started to read this book, and it was absolutely...

I felt the shift that you talk about, that you say on page seven that this will be meaningless to you or you will feel the shift. I started to feel the shift. And one of the things that really occurred to me as I was going through various chapters and having aha, aha, aha moment after another is what a clear...

how clear this message is. What a clear channel it seemed to come through for you. It was like I'd never, you know, didn't know you or hadn't met you in person, even through the radio.

We weren't sitting in the same studio. How did this come to be? How did this come through you, to you?

[Speaker 1] (44:36 - 45:26)

Well, it comes out of the space of stillness. That's where all creative endeavor is born. So it's getting in touch with the stillness within, where there's no mental noise.

And out of that stillness, when the time is right, sometimes an impulse comes, a feeling, a strong sense that something wants to be born into this world. I had the same strong sense before writing The Power of Now. That was 13 years ago when I started writing it.

I had left England. I was living in England. And I had this strong impulse one morning, and I was in England still, knowing I had to move to the west coast of North America without knowing why.

[Speaker 2] (45:28 - 45:29)

This was just a feeling you had.

[Speaker 1] (45:29 - 46:17)

Yes, a strong knowing. So it's not through a decision-making process, just the realization I have to move there. I don't know why, but I have to go.

It was such a total... absolutely no doubt about it. So I moved to Vancouver, and then I took a Greyhound bus to California.

I knew only one or two people. And I said, Why am I here? Three weeks passed.

Somebody put me up in a room near San Francisco, and suddenly I bought a notepad, and suddenly the strong stream came through, and I wrote, What is Enlightenment? The Beginning of the Power of Now. The moment I wrote that, I knew this is the book that wants to be born.

So rather than me wanting to write a book, there was a book that wanted to be written.

[Speaker 2] (46:19 - 46:23)

It's like Michelangelo says, The angel's in the marble, and he just cuts away the marble.

[Speaker 1] (46:25 - 47:30)

I'll come back to that in a second. For most people, that is the approach to what is my purpose, to look at what the greater purpose is. What does the greater purpose want from me?

What does life or God want from me rather than what do I want from life? So that's the starting point. I know that sometimes in new age you have the question, Well, what do you want?

It's fine to ask that question, but a more powerful question is, What does life want from me? How do I fit into the, what is the totality? What is my place within the whole?

So this is how it started, as knowing that this is what life wants from me. The book wants to be born, and the same thing happened later with the new earth. Again, a similar sense of, Oh, there's another book that wants to come.

I didn't know why, because everybody told me, Well, you've said it all in The Power of Now. Why write another book? Intellectually, I couldn't have answered, Why am I writing another book?

And it happened.

[Speaker 2] (47:30 - 47:41)

And it happened. Were you asking life, universal energy? I don't know, what do you call that?

I call it God. What word do you use for that?

[Speaker 1] (47:42 - 47:43)

Consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (47:43 - 47:47)

Were you asking consciousness? Were you saying, What do you want from me?

[Speaker 1] (47:47 - 48:00)

Yes. There was a time, for quite a few years, I lived in England, and I just did some spiritual teaching on a very small scale, sometimes little workshops, and so on.

[Speaker 2] (48:00 - 48:06)

I read in the paper today, in the USA Today, where you said you started out with 10 or 12 people in people's homes.

[Speaker 1] (48:07 - 48:23)

Yes, for quite a while, I would teach in people's living rooms, invited a group of friends, and this was the beginning of informal spiritual teaching. And as I said to the person who interviewed me, this is coming full circle now, because now I'm back in people's living

rooms, just more of them.

[Speaker 2] (48:24 - 48:43)

I think we have more than 10 or 12 joining us this evening. And so, the book, would you sit and passages would come to you? Would you actively get up at a certain time and say, I'm going to write today?

Or know what you were going to write before it was written?

[Speaker 1] (48:44 - 49:34)

No, not knowing it beforehand, but every day there was a space for writing. Every morning, and until two in the afternoon or so, the space was set aside for writing. That was the writing space.

And there were days when the flow was not very strong, so maybe only a few lines got written, or even none at all. Nevertheless, I always honored that space of, I'm ready for the writing to happen. I'm not saying that the writing happened automatically.

My mind was involved. It wasn't a channeled book as such. It was inspired, but not channeled.

So it involved my thinking processes too. But the thinking process had to be inspired from something deeper. You can't rely on your thinking processes only to produce something that is powerful and original.

[Speaker 2] (49:35 - 50:02)

So already you've shared with us that in order to awaken to your life's purpose, one of the key things we must do is not try to tell life what our purpose is. Not go around even, I don't know, trying to define for ourselves. Because a lot of people say many times, I've done seminars across the country, and they'll say, I don't know what my purpose is.

You're saying you must ask life what purpose does it have for you.

[Speaker 1] (50:03 - 51:07)

Yes. And the answer may not immediately come. A very important part of asking life so that you can be ready to receive the answer is to practice inviting moments of stillness into your life so that you're not continuously absorbed in the incessant mental noise that we call thinking, most of which is unnecessary and repetitive.

So to find spaces of stillness is vital if you want to get to the place where the answers are, potentially. So for quite a few years when I lived in England and did spiritual teaching on a small scale, sometimes I would say, okay, there's much more that I could

do. I said to life, I'm ready.

But life just waited and waited. The answer didn't come for several years until that morning when it said, move. Move.

[Speaker 2] (51:08 - 51:10)

Move to Vancouver.

[Speaker 1] (51:11 - 52:35)

Yes, and why did I have to move to write it there? I didn't realize that. Every place, Vancouver and California, that's where the Power of Now was written.

I was moving back and forth. I didn't have a home as such. I stayed with friends, moving back and forth.

And so only later I realized I had to move because the energy field on the West Coast, this is what I needed for the book to be born. The energy field in England, although I love England, I have a deep inner connection with England, the energy field there was not right for, in my personal case, for this book to come out. So I only realized that after I had to go back to England and then I stayed in a community because I didn't have a home of my own anymore, and I wanted to continue writing, but I couldn't do very much there because I thought, why can't I continue?

The stream stopped. I could only do editing and correction. That was necessary too.

But only when I went back to the West Coast, my visa had expired, I had to go to England, and I went back, immediately the flow came back. And I said, oh, now I know why I had to move. So it's often trusting life when a very strong impulse comes.

But you may have to wait. It doesn't mean that you necessarily immediately obey every impulse because impulses can also come from more superficial levels within yourself.

[Speaker 2] (52:35 - 53:22)

But you were wise enough to know the difference. You had discernment to know the difference. Well, it's so interesting because you, in the beginning of A New Earth, start out talking about a flower.

And I've heard many people who, because I go on the message boards every day, I'm loving you on the message boards, everybody. And many people are saying that they look at flowers differently now. I can certainly say that I do.

And one of the things that you said that struck me when you said that they are representatives of the spiritual realm, and that when you are still, allow yourself to be

still with a flower or a crystal or a bird or really anything of nature. Yes. But you used a flower specifically because...

[Speaker 1] (53:22 - 53:47)

Because a flower is... Nature on the whole is a beautiful access point into inner stillness, if you can be there fully present. But a flower is even...

You say messengers from another realm. Yes, like messengers. A flower is very...

much more fragile than a plant. It is more fleeting. Ethereal, I think, is the word.

[Speaker 10] (53:48 - 53:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (53:48 - 54:24)

More ethereal. So it has less density to it than most other things. And because of the lack of density, it's almost as if spirit could flow through it more freely.

So when you contemplate a flower without too much interference of the thinking mind to actually truly look, which is what Jesus said by the way, I mean, in churches you hear Jesus saying, look at the lilies of the field. Yes. And so when he said that he wasn't just saying, look at the lilies of the field.

[Speaker 3] (54:24 - 54:25)

He said, look. Aren't they pretty? Yes.

[Speaker 1] (54:25 - 55:03)

He said, look. You really have to look because there is something that they embody something that you also have but because of all your anxiety about tomorrow and your thinking I'm translating very freely now what Jesus said. These flowers are not anxious.

They are not concerned about tomorrow and see how beautiful they are. How God clothes them in such beauty. And you can live like that also.

So he used this natural realm and flowers to get people in touch with the dimension of depth within them.

[Speaker 2] (55:03 - 56:24)

Well, what's very interesting to me about all of this is that when I read that the first time I thought it was, you know, a beautiful passage and then I read it a second time and awakened a little bit more and started to look at nature differently. You know, I have a,

you know, live in a lovely space where I'm surrounded by flowers, not in Chicago, but in California. And you know, I always just appreciated the garden.

Aren't they lovely and all the different colors and the roses and all that. And then I decided to move into the garden without naming it. What if I were like a babe?

What if I were a babe? You know, learning what a flower was for the first time. What if I went out under the oaks that I love so much, but I didn't know it was an oak.

I didn't know what to call it. And I shared this in one of our after shows that for the first time, and I've loved trees all of my life and the sense of power and stillness they represent, but by not naming those things in nature that I felt a magical presence. I felt a sense of majesty and power and strength and connection that I'd never felt before.

Because I didn't give it a name.

[Speaker 9] (56:25 - 56:25)

Yes, that's the key.

[Speaker 2] (56:25 - 56:32)

Yes. I didn't give it a name or have a reference for everything that a tree has meant in my life. Isn't it?

[Speaker 1] (56:32 - 56:53)

That's right. So being present with the perception. And this theme runs, perhaps the main theme running through the whole book is that state where the compulsive naming of things, and you start with nature because that's easier to let go of the naming.

Later we'll be talking about that in some future sessions.

[Speaker 2] (56:53 - 56:54)

Stop labeling people.

[Speaker 1] (56:54 - 57:39)

Yes, that's more difficult because people invite the labels. Yes. Because there's so much mind in everybody and they label you and you label them.

But with nature, this is the starting point to find a different relationship to nature. It doesn't mean that you need to forget what you have learned about trees or about flowers. When it's necessary, you can get that knowledge and you'd use it.

Right. But not to be totally in the grip of what you have learned of mental labels, of

interpreting mentally, but being able to perceive. One could call it perceive the flower, see it through a background of just stillness.

Just stillness. Which is really consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (57:39 - 58:12)

Well, I will tell you, it's amazing for all of those of you who've tried this and I know some of you have because you've emailed us and said so. But when you start to walk through a park or walk in your backyard or begin to, and you're right, it's easier with nature than with people. And pretend that you don't know or just let yourself be in the space without labeling the things.

It's just everything's vibrating and it's like, you know, scintillating. Everything's exciting.

[Speaker 9] (58:12 - 58:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (58:13 - 58:19)

Everything's exciting. A walk through the park becomes exciting and it's the same path you've always taken.

[Speaker 1] (58:19 - 59:05)

Yes. And before, when you were involved in your mind, perhaps you didn't even see it. Never saw it.

Yeah. And so many people are so trapped in this continuous mental noise that absorbs their whole attention all the time. Every thought absorbs this stream of thinking, absorbs their attention.

They don't see that the world around them is vitally alive. So you become, gradually, as people then grow older, the world around them becomes more and more lifeless and dead. Right.

And that happens to them also. And why is that? Because...

That is because you are run by mental abstraction. All the concepts and the thoughts in the head are abstractions. It's not life.

[Speaker 2] (59:05 - 59:14)

So you can't take in the information that's there to be received all around you because you're so... You're in your head.

[Speaker 1] (59:14 - 59:31)

You're in your head. You're not present. So you're lost in thought.

I could say that's the human condition is being lost in thought. And people don't... And that, of course, is the famous, what we call, the voice in the head.

Some people have been asking about.

[Speaker 2] (59:31 - 59:33)

Which we'll be talking a lot about, the voice in the head.

[Speaker 1] (59:33 - 59:37)

Some people say, what voice in the head? It's that one.

[Speaker 2] (59:39 - 59:46)

All right. So Kelly from Alton, Illinois, joins us via Skype. Kelly?

Hi. Hi.

[Speaker 4] (59:47 - 59:56)

What's your question? Thank you for having me. Well, good.

Where are you? Home? I'm at home.

Okay, good. This is the coolest thing.

[Speaker 2] (59:56 - 1:00:07)

Isn't this cool? It is. It's crazy.

It's crazy. That's what I think. It's crazy that we're, like, out here, wherever this is, talking to each other.

Okay. What's your question?

[Speaker 4] (1:00:07 - 1:00:38)

Well, my question is regarding religion and spirituality. I had a Catholic upbringing. I married a Catholic, and we're raising our children this way.

In reading books, such as Tully's, I've really... It's really opened my eyes up to a new way of thinking, a new form of spirituality that doesn't always align with the teachings of Christianity. So my question is to you, Oprah, how have you reconciled these spiritual teachings with your Christian beliefs?

[Speaker 2] (1:00:39 - 1:04:47)

Oh, the question's to me. I was resting, knowing it was going to be about... I've reconciled it because I was able to open my mind about the absolute indescribable hugeness of that which we call God.

I took God out of the box because I grew up in the Baptist church, and there were, you know, rules and, you know, belief systems and doctrine. And I happened to be sitting in church in my late 20s, and I was going to this church where you had to get there at, you know, 8 o'clock in the morning, or you couldn't get a seat, and a very charismatic minister, and everybody was just, you know, into the sermon, and this great minister was preaching about how great God was, and how omniscient and omnipresent and God is everything. And then he said, and the Lord thy God is a jealous God.

And I was, you know, caught up in the rapture of that moment until he said jealous. And something struck me. And I was like, I think about 27 or 28.

I was thinking, God is all. God is omnipresent. God is all.

And God's also jealous. God is jealous of me. And something about that didn't feel right in my spirit, because I believe that God is love, and that God is in all things.

And so, that's when the search for something more than doctrine started to stir within me. And I love this quote that Eckhart has. This is one of my favorite quotes in chapter one, where he says, man made God in his own image, the eternal, the infinite, and unnameable was reduced to a mental idol that you had to believe in and worship as my God or our God.

Now, I think that's very eloquently put by Eckhart Tolle in chapter one. But that is exactly what I was feeling when I was, you know, sitting in church that Sunday listening to the preacher. And, you know, it's been a journey to get to the place where I understand, as I said on the pre-show here, that what I believe is that Jesus came to show us Christ's consciousness.

That Jesus came us to show us the way of the heart, and that what Jesus was saying, that to show us the higher consciousness that we're all talking about here. Jesus came to say, look, I'm going to live in the body, in the human body, and I'm going to show you how it's done. These are some principles and some laws that you can use to live by to know that way.

And when I started to recognize that, that Jesus didn't come in my belief, even as a Christian, I don't believe that Jesus came to start Christianity. So that was also very helpful to me. And as I said earlier in the pre-show here, there was a wonderful book called Discover the Power Within You by Eric Butterworth, which helped me reconcile the two.

So that might be really good for those of you who are Christian and trying to balance the two. What would you say? Because one of the things that Eckhart says in the beginning of this book on page 6 is that this book's main purpose is not to add new information or beliefs to your mind or to try to convince you of anything, but to bring about a shift in consciousness, that is to say, to awaken.

He says that on page 6. And one of the reasons why I appreciate him so much is because he truly isn't out to become your next guru. He doesn't want, you know, all of you who are online with us tonight and those millions who will now hear about this book, he's not interested in being your guru.

Correct?

[Speaker 9] (1:04:47 - 1:04:48)

Yes. Correct.

[Speaker 2] (1:04:48 - 1:05:11)

Yeah. How would you respond to that? That's one of the biggest questions that we have coming into our message boards about the same thing that Kelly is addressing here from Alton about spirituality and religion.

This is not about trying to tell you how to believe. And how do you advise people to reconcile this with their religious beliefs?

[Speaker 1] (1:05:11 - 1:06:47)

Well, religion can be an open doorway into spirituality and religion can be a closed door that prevents you from going deeper. I love reading the New Testament and I also read the Old Testament. Sometimes there's some incredible jewels in there.

And when I went through this inner transformation and for the first time accidentally I picked up a copy of the New Testament at my mother's place and I started reading and I immediately recognized the deep truth that is there and I realized the truth that is deeper, that is expressed in what Jesus said, is much deeper than how the church interprets it. There's a depth to it and it reflects your own depth when you read it. There's no conflict between this teaching, which is purely spiritual, and any religion, because if you go deep enough into your religion then you all get to the same place.

It's a question of going deeper. So there's no conflict here. The important thing is that religion doesn't become an ideology.

I believe this and the moment you say only my belief or our belief is true and you deny other people's beliefs, then you've adopted an ideology. And then religion becomes a closed door. But potentially religion can also be an open door.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:48 - 1:08:42)

Well let me share this with you too, Kelly. There is another book by a woman named Elizabeth Lesser, it's called The Seeker's Guide, where she talks about the new spirituality versus the old. So I just wanted to, this is on page 51 and 52 of Elizabeth Lesser's book called The Seeker's Guide, and she talks about old spirituality versus the new spirituality.

And she says the old was, the old way, is the hierarchy has the authority. Church authorities tell you how to worship in church and how to behave outside of church. The new spirituality is that you are your own best authority.

As you work to know and love yourself you discover how to live a more spiritual life. The old is God and the path to worship him have already been defined and all you need to do is follow the directions. The new is being able to listen within for your own definition of spirituality.

Your deeper longings are your compass on the search. And the old says exactly what Eckhart was saying. That there is only one path.

It's the right way and all other ways are wrong. And the new spirituality says that many paths lead to spiritual freedom and peace. You have a rich array of gems from which to draw illumination.

The world's religious traditions, mythology, psychology, healing methods, scientific wisdom, your own experience and that you can begin to string a necklace all your own. Then she lists other old and new. And so it's really a question of what you were saying to us earlier.

That this material strikes a chord within you. Something in you opens up and once feels alive and is awakened to that. And yet there is the ideology that says what?

To you. What is the conflict for you?

[Speaker 4] (1:08:43 - 1:09:06)

Just thoughts on the afterlife. Things like that. In a lot of books, such as Tole's, we get teachings from Buddhism or Hinduism and those thoughts don't go along with what I was raised to believe as a Christian.

That's been the biggest thing that I've struggled with, I think.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:06 - 1:09:13)

I am a Christian who believes that there are certainly many more paths to God other than Christianity.

[Speaker 4] (1:09:14 - 1:09:14)

Right.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:15 - 1:09:23)

I'm a free-thinking Christian who believes in my way, but I don't believe that it's the only way with six billion people here on the planet.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:24 - 1:09:36)

Right. Another author who might appeal to you, who uses Christian terminology but goes very, very deep using Christian language and Christian teachings, Joel Goldsmith.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:37 - 1:09:37)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:38 - 1:09:40)

Joel Goldstein? Goldsmith.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:40 - 1:09:40)

Oh, Goldsmith.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:40 - 1:09:48)

Joel Goldsmith. Any book by Joel Goldsmith, I think you would try that and see how deep the Christian teaching can be.

[Speaker 4] (1:09:50 - 1:09:52)

Okay. Well, thank you very much.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:52 - 1:10:23)

Thanks, Kelly. You're our first Skyper. Great.

I didn't know what Skype was until this. Now we're Skyping all over. We have a Chicago study group watching our webcast together at Borders.

Hello. Borders flagship store right there on Michigan Avenue. Hi, everybody.

Hello. I know. Listen, I know it's my ego, but I just can't keep saying, stop saying how cool this is.

I hear that's Ryan. You're Ryan?

[Speaker 6] (1:10:24 - 1:10:25)

Yes, I'm Ryan.

[Speaker 2] (1:10:25 - 1:10:27)

Okay. Hello, Oprah. Hi.

Got a question?

[Speaker 6] (1:10:27 - 1:10:57)

Mr. Tully. I do. I have a question for actually either of you.

And it relates to the spiritual awakening that you speak of in Chapter 1. It seems to me that if you look at human history in the past 100 years and very poignantly in the past 10 years that there's been this intensity and speed at which people are becoming more aware of this Christ consciousness. And why do you think that is the case now?

Why is this happening now?

[Speaker 1] (1:10:58 - 1:11:31)

It's happening now because we are reaching a crisis point. Very essential things don't happen until there's an absolute need for them to happen. So we can say in the past, this awakening has been a luxury.

And only a few individuals here and there throughout the ages were able to be awakened. And they tried to teach others but to a large extent their teachings became misinterpreted. So we are awakening now.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:31 - 1:11:32)

Jesus was a revolutionary.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:32 - 1:11:33)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:33 - 1:11:34)

Got misinterpreted a lot.

[Speaker 1] (1:11:34 - 1:13:09)

Yes. We are awakening now because we have to awaken if humanity is to make it to a next evolutionary level. We need to awaken because the egoic consciousness will become has already become very destructive.

It will become more and more destructive. We will destroy ourselves and the planet if we do not step out of the egoic consciousness, the collective ego. If you look at the history of the 20th century, it gives you a taste of what it will be if there is no major shift.

I wrote in The Power of Now that 100 million human beings were killed by other humans during the 20th century through warfare and so on. And I recently read in a history book by a Harvard professor that my figure was much too low. It's as much as 160 to 180 million human beings were murdered through warfare and concentration camps and prison camps and starvation, purpose manufactured starvation because China, Russia and so on.

It's unbelievable insanity when you look at that history. So if there is no shift in consciousness, we will go downhill very quickly because we are already in the process of destroying the planet, but there will also be continuous conflict, collective conflict, and eventually then humanity would collapse. So you think we're at a crisis point now?

Crisis point, yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:09 - 1:13:52)

Well, Ryan, don't you think so too? I mean, when you were with your friends, you know, obviously you're gathered here at Borders Tonight because you are interested in this kind of this way of thinking, but we all talk about it in some form or another, how bad things are, how you know, the media, everybody complains about the media and the movies. I mean, if you just look at the Academy Awards this year and the kinds of movies that were made this year and it's all a reflection of who we are and you say in the book how we're the species that will go and watch other people on film be maimed and killed and murdered for our entertainment.

[Speaker 6] (1:13:52 - 1:14:09)

Yes. It's amazing. And it's noise.

It's the mind. It's all of that and my friends and I talk about it and it's things where we want to push that out and say, well, we choose not to look at those things. We choose not to surround ourselves with that type of energy.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:09 - 1:15:02)

But I just got it. I just had an epiphany and aha as Eckhart was speaking here. I mean, and I'd read this several times in the book too, the number of people murdered, maimed, destroyed by other human beings during the 20th century, but the aha for me was, yes, look at what we did in the 20th century.

Look at the surge that we've had in our technological abilities. Look at you right now.

We're Skyping each other.

The advancement in our abilities to create new bombs, new ways of killing each other, so that in the 21st century, if there isn't a shift, if you had a hundred, over a hundred million people killed in the 20th century, God only knows. And I do mean God only knows what will happen to us unless we start to change this.

[Speaker 1] (1:15:02 - 1:15:20)

Yes, because technology amplifies the egoic dysfunction in human beings. So before, the dysfunction was the same 2,000 years ago, but we couldn't do that much harm because the technology wasn't there. The very same dysfunction still operates and becomes magnified through science and technology.

[Speaker 6] (1:15:22 - 1:15:35)

Does that answer your question, Ryan? It does, and it just makes me think of what could we do if we just focused that same energy on the positive and helping other people, and I feel that that's where we're going.

[Speaker 2] (1:15:35 - 1:16:21)

But it's also not just the positive. One of the things that I think we all learn from reading A New Earth, that it's not just about being positive, it's about putting our own egos in check. Because as we begin to move forward in our studies the next 10 weeks, you'll see that first you have to see the voice in your head, see how you're contributing to it.

Because I think, you know, for years we've all heard that we're all, if you're not a part of the problem you're a part of the solution. I think most of us don't understand, and I did understand to an extent, but got it even more clearly after reading A New Earth, understand how we're contributing to the problem. And the way we're all contributing to the problem is, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:16:22 - 1:17:20)

Well, you need to look at your own mind. So it's everybody's responsibility to become aware of their conditioned mental processes, how you react in everyday situations, what kind of thoughts go through your head. It's good to not amplify the negativity that you see around you in the world by reacting to it.

You have to be very much aware, of course, of what your mind is doing. So observe your own mind, be there as the witness of your mind so that the witnessing dimension, which is awareness or presence, grows. You are not your thought processes.

The thought processes are conditioned through thousands and thousands of years of conditioning. And there is dysfunction built into the very structure of our thought

processes, and this is how the ego arises. We'll talk about that in more detail.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:20 - 1:17:20)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:20 - 1:17:35)

But to recognize in oneself, you may not contribute to the murder and so on out there in the world, but it's everybody's responsibility to discover that dysfunction within them.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:36 - 1:18:05)

Yeah, so you get that right, Ryan. What he's saying is that there is a collective consciousness that he talks about, pages 11 and 12. The dysfunction of the ego human mind has created the situation in the world today, he says, in the New Earth.

And what I hear you saying, Eckhart, is that our individual fears, doubts, angers, jealousies, resentments all contribute to the collective.

[Speaker 9] (1:18:05 - 1:18:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:06 - 1:18:28)

And so in order to begin to change the collective, each one of us has a responsibility to sort of mine that within ourselves. Yes. Because that's how we're contributing to the collective.

Yes. Yeah, and it's not just the road ragers. It's however you're holding resentment and anger and jealousy and fear in your own life.

That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:28 - 1:18:46)

Yes. What is it that you're putting out into the world? Is there negativity, mental, emotional, in you?

Yes. Because that contributes to the collective energy field. So you can only go, so it's up to the individual to go, to step out of the egoic consciousness.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:46 - 1:18:53)

You got that right, Ryan? That makes a lot of sense. Yeah, it does make a lot of sense.

Thank you. Thank you, Borders.

[Speaker 1] (1:18:54 - 1:18:55)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:18:55 - 1:19:01)

We've got Erica, who lives on a U.S. military base in Landstuhl, Germany.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:01 - 1:19:03)

Oh, you're in the middle of the night.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:03 - 1:19:05)

In the middle of the night. Yes. Hi.

[Speaker 7] (1:19:06 - 1:19:06)

Morning.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:07 - 1:19:07)

Morning.

[Speaker 7] (1:19:08 - 1:19:17)

Hi, Erica. Hi, Oprah. Thank you so much.

This has just been crazy, as you said. Crazy fun.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:18 - 1:19:24)

Yes. Landstuhl, Germany. Never heard of it, but glad to have you from there.

Hello.

[Speaker 7] (1:19:25 - 1:19:27)

Thank you. Glad. Thank God for Skype.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:27 - 1:19:31)

Thank God for Skype. Okay. What is your question or comment to us?

[Speaker 7] (1:19:32 - 1:20:11)

Well, my question is for Mr. Toley. I, too, grew up in the Baptist Church, just like Oprah and so many others. And you talk about the voice in my head.

And I had a situation where I no longer attend that church because the behavior didn't line up with the teaching. But on Sundays when I'm at home with my family and we're enjoying a nice day and we decided not to go to church, that voice in my head says things like, you didn't go to church today. That's not how you were raised.

When your mom calls, what are you going to say? Can you help me with that on explaining why we have the voice in the head that says things like that?

[Speaker 9] (1:20:12 - 1:20:12)

Yes.

[Speaker 7] (1:20:13 - 1:20:16)

Yes, he can help you, Erica.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:18 - 1:22:57)

Now, the voice, of course, is the conditioned thinking. The voice, what the voice says, is conditioned by your past, by your childhood, by your upbringing, by the surrounding culture. All those things condition your thought processes.

And when you, sometimes it happens when you awaken, maybe not completely, but when the awakening process begins, a lot of the old voices in the head, the old thoughts, still come up. They still come up. And the essential thing is to recognize them as conditioned thought processes.

Because the fact that you're asking the question means there's already an awareness there that these are the voices in your head, so you're not totally identified. Because if you were totally identified with the voice, you would say, I feel so terrible, I really think I should be doing this. But you realize it's the voice in the head that's doing it.

And then you can allow it and say, okay, there's an old thought, and allow it to be there and be the awareness behind the thought. And anybody, this is not just for your particular case, there are many other instances where people have the movement of thought, telling them this or that, interpreting events and people according to the old conditioning, when you meet people, telling you immediately, judging somebody according to your old conditioning, with prejudices, with all the old conditioning. So the only way you can gradually go beyond the conditioned thought processes is simply to be there as the witness.

You don't need to act on it or say, go away, I don't want to be thinking this, that doesn't work. It would only give it more energy. So, again, a vital thing, and this will be going throughout the book and the teaching is as much as possible, be aware of what your mind is saying and realize there's only a small part of the consciousness, the totality of

consciousness that you are.

Many people don't know that yet. They're totally one with the voice. They are the voice.

They're so identified with every thought that comes, there's no space between them and the thought. So the essential thing is this, realize there's thought processes and here I am as the space for the thought. As the awareness or the space for the thought.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:57 - 1:23:00)

And that the thought is only a part of...

[Speaker 1] (1:23:00 - 1:23:12)

A small part, it's the conditioned part of who you are. And that's time bound, it's conditioned by the past. There's a more essential part of who you are and that is the awareness that knows that there's a voice.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:12 - 1:23:14)

The awareness of the thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:14 - 1:23:14)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:14 - 1:26:07)

Which we're going to get into in further detail. But also, Erica, let me share this with you. Part of what you and our first caller from Alton, Illinois was also talking about is trying to reconcile the two.

The reason why the voice keeps repeating is because of course of what Eckhart is saying, it's conditioned thinking. But also the guilt is you haven't made a decision for yourself about what is real or true for you. So you're still being led by the conditioned thinking and haven't made a decision.

And for me that came when I was able to do exactly what Eckhart said earlier. I didn't phrase it the way he did. I ask God to use me.

That has been my prayer for many years. You know, Eckhart says, ask life what is its purpose for you. But I would pray on my knees to God and ask to be used and to be a servant and to allow his spirit to work through me and to not to just be on television, but to be able to use television for a purpose that was greater than my own personality and to collect shoes in my closet.

Didn't mean I wanted to give up the shoes, but I would if I had to. So when I started to

ask that question of God, how can I be used? God, how do you want me to live?

How would you have me be? I let go of the guilt of did I make it to church or I didn't make it to church because the majesty and power and omniscience of this force that we call God cannot be contained in a church. You're right.

Cannot be contained in a church and does not just want to be served in a church. But if church allows you to feel like you are being of service, then use it that way. But the bigness is what Eckhart was saying in that quote in the book, man made God in his image, the eternal, the infinite, and unnameable force that that is God, that is all consciousness, that is universal energy.

I don't believe wishes to just be served on Sunday at 11 o'clock service. And so that's what you're trying to reconcile with yourself. The voice in your head versus what you really should be doing.

That's it. Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (1:26:07 - 1:26:07)

That's it.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:08 - 1:26:25)

You need to make that decision for yourself. Thank you. And start asking that question of God.

Okay. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Erica from Lundstuhl. Lundstuhl, Germany. We have Adam from Redmond, Washington on the phone with a question.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:26 - 1:26:27)

Yes. Hello?

[Speaker 2] (1:26:27 - 1:26:29)

Oh, on the phone phone. Hi.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:29 - 1:26:30)

Hi there.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:30 - 1:26:31)

Hi. Hi, Adam.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:32 - 1:26:34)

Hi. Thank you so much, both of you.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:36 - 1:26:43)

I feel a little like Larry King is the caller there. A little like Larry King. Okay.

[Speaker 5] (1:26:44 - 1:27:14)

Go ahead. Yeah. Well, I used your online study group to create a couple groups out here which I called Embracing Silence.

And the purpose of joining together for meditation and study and discussion and to create a field of presence and share with others in that. And I'm curious, what role do you see community or joining with others with the intention of sharing this consciousness playing in the flowering of human consciousness?

[Speaker 1] (1:27:15 - 1:28:42)

Good. Good question. Yes.

It's very important and of course what's happening here tonight is part of that also because it is joining on a level that we haven't seen before. It's the arising presence. You can access it much more easily as part of a larger community or group of people.

So to have in your home, to have a group of people who practice being present, perhaps listen to a spiritual talk or have a little reading, enter stillness, be present, is extremely helpful because an energy field is generated when people come together and enter the state of presence together. So, and this is happening here also, although people are not physically together and yet there is an energy field now that is generated all over the planet of presence, a different level of consciousness being generated. So it's extremely helpful to join with others.

Also it needs to be said not to become dependent on any group. It is still your responsibility to bring this new consciousness into everyday life. Whenever you go about your business, in your family...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:42 - 1:28:44)

Once you become dependent upon the group, then you now...

[Speaker 1] (1:28:46 - 1:29:23)

Then you always need to go back to the group and you cannot live presence in your daily life. So the important thing, yes, go to the group to generate more presence and then your responsibility is to live it in your everyday life where most of the time, perhaps, you

will not yet be surrounded by people who are present. You will be surrounded by the old egoic consciousness.

So there, that is... And this is the challenge for everybody now who is awakening that, yes, more and more people are beginning to awaken and yet there are still vast numbers of people on the planet who are not.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:24 - 1:29:48)

But I was going to say that when Ryan from Borders was speaking to us and was saying, you know, the need to be more positive and there's all this negative energy in the world, look, we have 700 and some thousand of us all gathered here this evening, which is a huge positive force in creating the shift. And it's a different kind of community like we've never seen or experienced before.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:48 - 1:30:06)

That's right, yes. And then, of course, another kind of community is generated through the internet now and all these things that I don't know much about, but it's happening. So how people communicate with each other, and again, people are being linked in different ways with each other.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:06 - 1:30:09)

This is the arising of a new consciousness that he speaks about, Adam.

[Speaker 5] (1:30:11 - 1:30:34)

Well, it certainly is, and it's, you know, it's very pleasurable to spend time with others and sharing this consciousness, you know, like you said when you were under the tree and you felt that oneness and that majesty. Well, imagine if you had someone sitting there next to you to share that experience with. I think it makes it even that much more sacred.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:34 - 1:30:36)

I did have my two dogs, Luke and Layla were there.

[Speaker 5] (1:30:37 - 1:30:39)

Oh, wonderful. Wonderful.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:40 - 1:30:41)

Thanks, Adam.

[Speaker 5] (1:30:41 - 1:30:42)

It's a sacred moment. Yes, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:43 - 1:31:19)

Thank you, Adam. That's Adam from Redmond, Washington. Let's see some of the questions that you're sending us now.

Oh, this is cool. On email. Okay, we're going to check the computer screen here.

Ta-da. Questions are? Nothing's there.

Nothing's there. So I'll keep talking. One of the things that really struck us so was so many people responded to this.

Page 13. You don't become good by trying to be good. You don't become good by trying to be good.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:21 - 1:31:22)

And carry on.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:22 - 1:31:23)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:23 - 1:31:25)

There's more to that sentence.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:25 - 1:31:43)

Yes, there is. I must go to page 13 to find it. You don't become good by trying to be good.

But by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge. But it can only emerge if something fundamental changes in your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:43 - 1:32:36)

So what that means if nothing changes in your state of consciousness the ego has many ideas. It says, I want to be a spiritual person. I want to be recognized as a spiritual person.

I want to be more spiritual than all these people. And I'm definitely more spiritual than you. So the ego has all kinds of ideas of what it wants to be.

It might even say yes, I want to be good. Because it wants to have a better image of

itself. But on that level the essential dysfunction of the ego is still operating.

So this is why we have the phrase, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Because no matter how good your intentions are, when you're still trapped in the ego it will always take you into conflict eventually.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:37 - 1:32:40)

That's why I was saying to Ryan, you can't just think positively.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:40 - 1:32:43)

No. It's not enough. You have to go deeper.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:43 - 1:32:49)

You can think positively, but it is not enough, because eventually something negative will come along to challenge the positive.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:49 - 1:32:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:49 - 1:32:50)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:50 - 1:33:10)

So you must It's the realm of opposites. So you have to go deeper beyond the realm of opposites, where there's good and bad, and reach a place within yourself that is unconditioned. That is what I sometimes call the formless consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:10 - 1:33:11)

What I call spirit.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:12 - 1:34:52)

Expressed beautifully in the Old Testament, in the little saying Be still and know that I am God. And that's in the Old Testament. It contains the entire wisdom of religion in those few words.

Be still meaning, go to that place where the mind is no longer operating. Where you are just conscious without thinking. And that is the level where the eternal resides.

So the eternal, the formless, the spirit is the essence of every human being. No matter how insane or conflict ridden they seem to appear on the surface, within every human

being, that remains untouched. There's nothing that anybody could have done to you, or nothing that you could have done to others to destroy that.

It's always there. And that is the grace of being here. And no matter how much madness there has been in your life, that remains untouched.

So it's getting in touch with that deepest place within. And you can only do that by becoming still. Now, becoming still does not mean that you go to sleep.

It means you're actually more alert than when you're thinking. You have to invite the stillness into your life as much as possible.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:52 - 1:34:56)

That's why I loved your book, Stillness Speaks. Only that small, but every page is a gem.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:57 - 1:34:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:34:57 - 1:35:44)

And also, it's what I was saying earlier, that in order to feel that, the way you feel that, for everybody who's listening to us now, the way you begin to feel that is to look at nature. If you were to go out and just be with a tree, and I don't mean hug a tree. We're not talking about now you gotta go hug a tree and eat granola.

But if you were just to be with anything in nature, I like trees because they're so majestic, they're so powerful and visual. And if you're with it for a time, you start to sense the presence of it, the stillness of it, and begin to recognize that stillness within yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:45 - 1:35:48)

So what you sense in the tree is also in you.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:49 - 1:35:52)

And it's always in the tree. When the wind is blowing and there's a storm.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:53 - 1:36:23)

And that is also a sacredness that is there in the tree. Our world doesn't know much of sacredness. It has become an abstract concept.

Nobody seems to know what sacredness is until you can feel it. When you feel, then you don't need a definition. People ask please define what sacred is.

You don't need a definition of what sacred is because sacred is the essence of who you are. So it's sensing that, and you can sense it when you're still enough. You sense it in the tree.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:23 - 1:36:28)

Now isn't it interesting that you first came to recognize this when you were about to kill yourself?

[Speaker 1] (1:36:29 - 1:36:50)

Yes. Sometimes you have to reach a limit. Humans have to reach a limit.

The human species as a whole is reaching that limit. But also on a personal level, sometimes people have to be pushed to the limit. My ego was so obstinate and my pain body was so strong I had to be pushed to the limit before it cracked open.

[Speaker 2] (1:36:50 - 1:36:58)

Before we go any further, share that moment that you talk about in the beginning of The Power of Now, when you were about to kill yourself, feeling so much pain.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:58 - 1:37:48)

Dreadful suffering at night. I would often wake up in extreme feeling of dread and fear. Consumed by dread and fear the whole world seemed alien.

I saw the thought one night I woke up again, the thought came I can't live with myself any longer. I just can't live with myself any longer. It's so painful.

And that thought repeated itself a few times and then suddenly something happened inside me and I looked at the thought. That was, of course, awareness. I didn't know at the time what it was.

I became aware of the thought and I said, I cannot live with myself. That's strange. So there must be I and there must be myself.

Am I one or two? I seem to be two. Because if I can't live with myself there must be two of me.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:48 - 1:37:56)

Everybody has felt that. Not to kill themselves, but everybody has felt or heard you say to yourself I said to myself.

[Speaker 1] (1:37:57 - 1:38:25)

Yes. And of course the entire what we call the voice in the head we could also call it self-talk. Where you talk to yourself and most people address themselves as you.

So the voice is, you shouldn't have done that or you should better... So there's a constantly there's a separation inside human beings which is the essence of ego. Right.

Here's an image of who I think I am and then there's a me and they get mixed up together.

[Speaker 2] (1:38:26 - 1:38:35)

Okay, I'm sorry I interrupted you with that thought though. Getting ready to kill yourself said I can't live with myself any longer. Yes.

Said that several times in your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:38:35 - 1:39:19)

And then I became aware of the structure of the sentence and said if that's the case then who is the self that I cannot live with and who am I? Wow. And at that moment a separation happened completely between the essential I which is the essential consciousness that I am beyond past and future the eternal stillness.

But awake stillness. And all my thought processes which were ego it was all my thought processes that created the dreadful suffering. The mind created entity, the unhappy me was continuously fed by my thinking.

It consisted of thinking. A stream of thinking.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:19 - 1:39:23)

So did you just decide that night I guess I'll wait to see if I will kill myself?

[Speaker 1] (1:39:23 - 1:39:39)

No. It was a kind of spiritual suicide so the ego died instead of me having to jump off a bridge, fortunately. The ego died.

The ego dissolved. The ego as the unobserved mind dissolved.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:40 - 1:39:40)

The ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:40 - 1:39:43)

The false self, the me, the unhappy story.

[Speaker 2] (1:39:43 - 1:39:44)

Oh, got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:39:44 - 1:40:15)

Me as the unhappy, my identity as me and my unhappy story. Died. Dissolved because the I behind it suddenly woke up and said who is that self that I can't live with?

And when you fully look at that self it actually dissolves because it cannot survive in the light of intense consciousness. And so the next morning I woke up and I didn't know that was strange what happened. I thought were you drinking?

No drinking. No drugs.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:16 - 1:40:18)

You had a couple sips or something.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:19 - 1:40:41)

Nothing. It just happened and I felt like being drawn into a kind of vortex and then I went to sleep and the last thing I felt, there was still some fear. A voice said don't resist or resist nothing.

Resist nothing. Don't resist. Resist nothing.

And so I must have gone to sleep then.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:41 - 1:40:43)

You had your first good night's sleep in God's Kingdom. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:43 - 1:41:11)

And the next morning I woke up and looked around and looked, everything looked so fresh. All the old furniture. The pencil.

Everything looked fresh and alive and I could hear birdsong outside. Wow. As if I'd never heard it before.

Wow. Because the mind had become still and there was simply the beautiful perception of everything. The sunlight coming through the curtains.

Incredible. I said I've never seen that before.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:13 - 1:41:14)

Sounds like a drug trip.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:14 - 1:41:31)

Well later on people tell me they ask me is that like acid? Because some people take acid and they say oh we experienced that when we took acid. They told me many times until finally, I'll tell you in confidence, finally I tried acid just for once.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:31 - 1:41:34)

You're telling me in confidence here? Yes. Okay good, go ahead.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:36 - 1:42:09)

I tried it just once just to see. If it was the same thing? Yes.

Yeah? It's not quite the same thing because what I experienced was much more subtle and beautiful. The acid I experienced as almost a violent thing where violently the perceptions, sense perceptions become so magnified that there was no room for thinking anymore.

But I could see why people say, why for some people it's a glimpse of what it means to perceive the world without this continuous interference of mental noise.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:10 - 1:42:12)

But your trip without acid was better.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:12 - 1:42:12)

Much better.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:14 - 1:42:51)

Part of what you're describing is what I came close to that when I decided to go outside without naming things or labeling things. It's what I was describing earlier, walking through the park, walking around my house which is like a park. Everything was like vibrating.

The colors and everything, the sense perception was very different because I wasn't in my mind thinking about it. I was just there to experience it. So that's how you get to that place.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:51 - 1:42:58)

That's right. So you're no longer there when you walk through your garden or wherever.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:59 - 1:43:00)

And you're not naming every flower.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:00 - 1:43:17)

You're not naming and also you're not carrying the burden of a heavy me, a personality, a person with its problems, with its past, with its future. You're not thinking about anything. So you are basically, you become a conscious presence perceiving the beauty around you.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:17 - 1:43:42)

It's fascinating. We do have an email now from Kathy in Delta, Colorado. Is that where you are?

Well, no, she can't talk. It's an email. How do I shed the years or rather decades of conditioning and distractions, sickness, relationships, work in order to hear and feel the moments of stillness?

Which is what we were just talking about.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:43 - 1:43:49)

The good thing is you don't need years and years to undo years and years of conditioning.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:50 - 1:43:51)

Do it in an instant.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:51 - 1:45:39)

Yes, only now. So it's the access point is the present moment. The present moment is the point of power to enter the new state of consciousness.

So we need to learn how to find in our daily life, as often as possible, this point of power of the present moment. Because if we don't, we get continuously dragged along by the old conditioning of the mind, all the old thought processes, all the old reactions, and so on. So, there are many little things you can do to access the power of the present moment.

For example, a very simple thing, ask yourself, am I still breathing? Now, what does that mean? To find out if you're still breathing, your attention needs to move from the thinking into here.

And you suddenly feel the air flowing into your body and out of your body. Yes, I'm breathing. At that moment, you've entered the state of presence.

Even if it's only five seconds, you've entered that, you've become present. In the moment. In that moment.

So, another thing I suggest is when you do habitual everyday motions, like washing your hands, or walking across the room, or walking down the stairs, or the slightest thing, taking a cup out of the cupboard. Do it consciously. Do it being present of every...

The feel, for example, you wash your hands, feel the water, smell the soap.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:39 - 1:45:42)

We have this in one of the workbook exercises online. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:43 - 1:45:54)

Sense perceptions, becoming acutely conscious of sense perceptions, which means looking, hearing, touching, also, brings you into the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:54 - 1:46:07)

How is that going to help me? Because I started doing that, going up the stairs. I was going, one foot on the stairs, there's another foot on the stairs, there's another foot, okay, I'm at the top of the stairs now.

I was present, walking up the stairs. What does that do for me, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:08 - 1:46:08)

Were you present?

[Speaker 2] (1:46:09 - 1:46:22)

Yeah, I think I was. There's a foot, there's a foot, there's a foot, there's a foot on the stairs. I'm just there.

The movement of... Feeling the motion of my body, and how many parts of my body have to move to get me up the stairs.

[Speaker 10] (1:46:23 - 1:46:23)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:23 - 1:46:27)

You know, oh, I used my, you know, thigh muscle there.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:27 - 1:46:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:27 - 1:46:29)

I used the back of the leg.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:29 - 1:46:36)

Good, okay, it was present. I wasn't sure from the way you said, I thought you were repeating mentally, here's one step and here's another step, but you were not.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:36 - 1:46:41)

No, I was not. I was feeling every part of what it took to get me up the stairs.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:41 - 1:46:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:42 - 1:46:42)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:42 - 1:46:45)

So now, the mind says, what's the point in that?

[Speaker 2] (1:46:45 - 1:46:50)

Yes, the mind then said, okay, now you were present getting up the stairs, now what?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:50 - 1:46:52)

And the mind says, I've got more important things to think about.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:52 - 1:46:53)

Yes, it did.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:54 - 1:47:13)

Mind said, now what did that do you? Now, to the mind, that kind of thing is completely meaningless, because you're inviting a different state of consciousness into your life, which the mind cannot understand. But this is, this is how you bring in awareness.

This is the end of the old conditioning.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:13 - 1:47:13)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:14 - 1:47:27)

And you bring in a consciousness that is totally fresh and new that comes out of the present moment. And the more you bring those moments of presence into your life, the more your old conditioning becomes eroded gradually.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:27 - 1:47:31)

I see. So, learning to do it with washing your hands.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:31 - 1:47:32)

Simple things.

[Speaker 2] (1:47:32 - 1:47:43)

This is good, this class is good for me. I don't know about the rest of y'all, but I got it now. Just learning to do the simple things begins to retrain your mind.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:43 - 1:48:05)

Yes. And another thing is, most simple things that you do, which actually fill up most person's everyday life, because the whole day consists of simple things that you have to do. Right.

They're all relatively simple. Right. And the way most people live is that everything you do is a means to an end.

And the end is where you want to get to, the next moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:05 - 1:48:08)

Right. So you're never thinking about the moment.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:08 - 1:48:17)

No, because you want to get to the next one. You're washing your hand in order to already do that, or you're making, while you're making a cup of coffee, you really want to be drinking it.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:17 - 1:48:30)

Yeah. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, Coming to Our Senses, that most people, every morning, people take a shower, they bathe, there's a but most people are in the shower, but they never actually get to experience a shower, because they're thinking, they're already in the office.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:30 - 1:48:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:30 - 1:48:31)

They're already in the office.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:31 - 1:48:40)

And then everything you do is a means to an end. The end is always the next moment in the future, which never arrives, because all you ever have in life is the present moment.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:40 - 1:48:49)

Present moment. So you're constantly frustrated, creating anxiety for yourself, and stress, because you can't just be present now.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:50 - 1:49:12)

And the power can only flow into your life when you are present completely, totally, with what you're doing now. And this is why most people's lives do not have this power, because they're always living for the next thing, so they... Trying to get to.

They devalue the present moment. Got it. And so...

[Speaker 2] (1:49:12 - 1:49:14)

That's why walking up the stairs, being with the stairs.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:14 - 1:49:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:15 - 1:49:17)

Teaches you how to be present with other things.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:18 - 1:49:32)

Yes. And then gradually you can be present with... Even when you are with other human beings, you can be totally present in whatever work you do, so that the work is not a means to an end, but you're totally there with what you do.

Your attention.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:33 - 1:49:39)

Well, I see Cinda from Oregon has been waiting to talk to us. Cinda? Hi, from Oregon.

What's your question?

[Speaker 3] (1:49:39 - 1:49:41)

Hello, Oprah. Hello, Eckhart. Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:42 - 1:49:42)

Hi.

[Speaker 3] (1:49:43 - 1:50:04)

Hey, I am so grateful for this opportunity to have Eckhart answer my question. Thank you for having me participate in this. And Eckhart, I need you to know that I am grateful that when you tried acid, that you preferred enlightenment more than that, because my children are upstairs listening in on this.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:05 - 1:50:09)

Because he was going to say, and I interrupted him. You were saying, I don't recommend it.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:09 - 1:50:21)

No, I don't. Why? Because it's...

You will always fall back. It's not... You always fall back to the old state of consciousness.

And it's almost... I experienced as almost a violent thing being done to me.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:22 - 1:50:25)

Okay, good. I wanted to say that for the children upstairs, Cinda.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:26 - 1:50:27)

Yeah, thank you, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:27 - 1:50:28)

Okay, your question.

[Speaker 3] (1:50:29 - 1:51:52)

Well, my question is this. And, you know, first of all, I also want to tell Eckhart that his words and his book have moved me to my core, and I am a new person because of it. And not only because of my internal changes, but the way that I am in the world that I live.

And I am so grateful for that. Thank you, Eckhart. I want to ask a question.

It's something that we've already talked about a little bit tonight, but I feel it's important enough to bring up again. And I believe that the way that Eckhart answers this question might just be the catalyst to change that we need in order to save our planet and ourselves. On pages 20 and 21 in the book, you talk about in an ever-changing world or an ever-changing environment, a species needs to either adapt or they will die out.

And then you go on to say, and I quote, that humanity is now faced with this dark choice. Evolve or die. My question to you is this.

When you say evolve or die, do you mean that literally, and it sounds like you might, or do you mean that metaphorically, which I hope?

[Speaker 1] (1:51:53 - 1:54:43)

Evolve or die refers to humanity as a whole, whether humanity survives as a species. Even if humanity did not survive as a species, no gain in consciousness is ever lost within the totality of consciousness. So the fact that we are here and consciousness, which is really all that exists, we are only forms that come out of consciousness.

And consciousness is the evolutionary process of the universe. And we are here together as part of this evolution of consciousness which comes through the human form. Consciousness can use and does use millions and billions of other forms and evolves through that out of the unmanifested.

In the unmanifested, consciousness is already perfect, or God you could say. Timeless, perfect, eternal, no change. And then you have this so-called manifested dimension which some ancient teachers have described as a kind of dream which is what it is.

But for some reason, consciousness wants to come into this world of form. And in this world of form it evolves. So one could say that gradually, more and more, God, which is another word for consciousness, God comes into this world of form, gradually emerges.

And God comes through you. God comes through me. God comes through you.

Gradually, more and more, the density of form lessens, and this is what's happening. And so, even if humanity didn't make it, consciousness would, the gain in consciousness that has already been achieved by those human beings who have become conscious would make consciousness express itself much more easily through some other form. Because ultimately, we are not the form.

We are not the body that we see. You are not the form that is sitting there. In essence, you are beyond.

You are the formless consciousness itself. With a stillness. Temporarily assuming this

particular form.

And of course, the form eventually is going to dissolve anyway because then consciousness moves on. Consciousness is continuous evolution, continuous metamorphosis. It's a wonderful process.

So there's nothing to be scared of because ultimately, when I say evolve or die, I'm only speaking of humanity as a species. But ultimately, nothing dies. It's only a transformation of consciousness.

A transformation of form. A transformation of form. So, there is no death.

[Speaker 2] (1:54:43 - 1:54:50)

But you do mean the end of our human species as we know it.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:50 - 1:55:24)

Yes, that is a possibility. But the fact that we are here tonight, which should give us hope and confidence that humanity is going to make it. Because this is growing and not just this teaching.

There are other spiritual, alive spiritual teachings. There is an enormous awakening happening on the planet. So, nobody knows.

I don't know the answer whether humanity is going to make it. But I do feel confident now, more so perhaps than before, that we are going to make it.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:25 - 1:55:42)

Well, yes. Because that's one of my favorite quotes too, Cinda, that we are a significant portion of the Earth's population will soon recognize if they haven't already done so that humanity is now faced with the stark choice, evolve or die. Thank you for raising that question in such a beautiful way, Cinda.

[Speaker 3] (1:55:43 - 1:55:45)

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:55:45 - 1:55:51)

Thanks for joining us. Casey in Asheville, North Carolina is on Skype and has a question also for Eckhart about The Secret. Casey?

[Speaker 8] (1:55:52 - 1:56:37)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Mr. Tully. I was debating about whether to read this book because it looked

very deep to me, to be honest.

And I have a one-year-old and I hang out with her all day and I didn't know if I was ready for it. But Oprah, when I saw your show on The Secret and The Bubble Man and all that good stuff, I thought, I have got to read that book because you talked about a new Earth so much in that show. So my question is this.

When I put out into the universe, when I ask God for things, for hopes and dreams and material things and a lot of times I get them, those material things, I think they may be coming from the ego and I just wonder, Mr. Tully, is that wrong?

[Speaker 1] (1:56:38 - 1:57:57)

Okay. Well, it's not wrong. You can always easily recognize that something is coming from ego because when you get it, it doesn't satisfy you.

That's always a sign that it's coming from ego. It may satisfy you for a little while and then it's like, oh, I need more. I need something else.

So that's a good learning process. You can manifest things and if you see, oh, that's not satisfying, it must have been the ego. So there's nothing wrong with manifesting things.

The only illusion would be to expect things to provide some ultimate satisfaction in your life. Things can't do that. The world of form can't ultimately satisfy you.

You can enjoy the world of form, but the true satisfaction doesn't come from there. The world can't do that. The world can't make you happy.

Things cannot give you happiness because happiness comes from a deeper place within you that you can only access in the present moment. So it's fine to live in the world of things. Why not manifest things?

It's part of the game in this life, the game of form. But if you expect some kind of satisfaction, then you'll always be frustrated.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:58 - 1:58:44)

Which is going to be, I think we get into that a lot in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Love Chapter 2. Love Chapter 2.

To be defined by the things. To be in the world and not of it is how I describe it. To have things.

I have lots of beautiful things and I love beautiful things. And later on in one of the chapters he talks about when you say that you're not defined by things, what happens to you if you were to lose any of those things? The depth of your grieving or sorrow or so-

called suffering determines how attached you were to those things.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:44 - 1:58:45)

Yes. And for many people...

[Speaker 2] (1:58:45 - 1:58:47)

It doesn't matter to me until somebody steals your car.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:48 - 2:00:19)

That's right. And for many people that's a very important lesson when suddenly they do lose something. It can be a wonderful spiritual lesson and then perhaps you suffer and then your attachment gets broken and suddenly you go beyond the attachment.

So there have been people who've lost everything and suddenly become free of the ego because the ego had nothing left to identify with. So this can happen. And another important thing to mention with regard to manifestation is the basis for your life is the present moment.

First of all, the very basis for everything is to come to an acceptance of this moment as it is. Gratitude is part of that. Of course we'll be talking about that in more detail.

So that there's no neediness when you manifest the neediness that there's dissatisfaction, for example, in your life. There's dissatisfaction. That is not a good place, not a good starting point for changing your life.

The ego may tell you that, but it isn't. You need to find a place of acceptance, which is... Wow, that's powerful.

No matter where you are, come to terms and become friendly with the present moment. Because if you do not become friendly with the present moment, you're not friendly with life. Because life is only now.

If you're not friendly with life, life cannot support you.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:19 - 2:00:27)

But did you just say that being in a place of dissatisfaction, being dissatisfied is not a good time or place to change?

[Speaker 1] (2:00:27 - 2:00:58)

It's first... You can see the totality of the situation. Let's say...

I use the example in the power of now. You're stuck in the mud. You're walking

somewhere and suddenly you get deep into the mud up to your knees.

Now you wouldn't say, OK, I'm satisfied with this situation. You can't be satisfied with this situation. And you know that you need to get out.

But you say, OK, here I am stuck in the mud and I need to get out. There is no... Cursing the mud.

Negative reaction. Yeah, there's no... Cursing.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:58 - 2:00:59)

Damn this mud!

[Speaker 1] (2:00:59 - 2:01:04)

Yes. Yeah. Or struggle against.

Yeah. Because if you struggle against, you get in deeper.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:04 - 2:01:06)

You're just going to get more mud on you.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:06 - 2:01:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:06 - 2:01:06)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:01:07 - 2:01:49)

So, very important, perhaps one of the key things here in this or any spiritual teaching is the question that you need to ask yourself as much as possible. You can even put it on your bathroom mirror or some other places where you often look. And that question is what is my relationship with the present moment?

And to become very conscious of that. And then you find out, then you of course need to become alert. OK, what's my relationship with this moment?

Am I... Is there negativity? In which case I'm fighting.

I'm making the present moment into an enemy. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:50 - 2:01:52)

What you say is what you resist persists.

[Speaker 9] (2:01:52 - 2:01:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:53 - 2:01:55)

So you must make peace with the moment.

[Speaker 9] (2:01:55 - 2:01:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:55 - 2:01:57)

Doesn't mean you have to be... approve the situation.

[Speaker 9] (2:01:57 - 2:01:58)

No.

[Speaker 2] (2:01:58 - 2:02:02)

But you must make peace with the moment in order to get yourself out of it.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:02 - 2:02:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:02 - 2:02:04)

Because resisting is only going to cause more of it.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:05 - 2:02:22)

Yes. And that's absolutely vital that... So, peace with what is.

The is-ness of this moment is already as it always already is as it is. The ego doesn't understand that, but you can't really argue with what is because it already is.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:22 - 2:02:26)

So you must accept whatever it is first before you can begin to change it. That's what you're saying.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:26 - 2:02:48)

Yes. There must be acceptance. Acceptance of what is first.

First. Then action comes out of the acceptance. It no longer comes out of resistance.

Got it. Which is a totally different energy flows into what you do when it comes out of an acceptance of this is what is. And then action happens.

That is actually empowered by life itself.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:49 - 2:02:51)

Well, I think that explained it, Casey.

[Speaker 8] (2:02:52 - 2:02:55)

I think so, too. Thank you so much. That's amazing.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:55 - 2:03:20)

Thank you so much. I just wanted to go back to spirituality and religion for a few moments and the few moments we have remaining because I know that's still such a major issue with so many of you. And you say on page 17 that the more you make your thoughts or beliefs into your identity the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself.

You also say on page 18 how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:20 - 2:03:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:21 - 2:03:24)

But everything to do with your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:24 - 2:03:38)

Yes. How spiritual you are means how present how present are you at this moment. Are you in your thoughts or are you there as the awareness behind your thoughts?

[Speaker 2] (2:03:38 - 2:03:39)

Which is your spirit.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:39 - 2:04:02)

Yes. Stillness. Yes.

Often in newspapers and the media they always ask what do you believe in? That is not an important question, what I believe in. The important question is are you present at this moment?

Not what your belief structures are.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:02 - 2:04:08)

I think people want to know what you believe so that they can label it and decide whether they're going to like you accept you or not.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:08 - 2:04:13)

Yes. And they want to know do you believe the same thing that I believe because if you don't you're my enemy.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:15 - 2:04:17)

Yeah. You're laughing at that. Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:17 - 2:04:20)

It's better to laugh at madness.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:20 - 2:04:29)

Yes. I just wanted to mention this person, Maria from Doha, Qatar. I just wanted to say Doha, Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:29 - 2:04:31)

In what country?

[Speaker 2] (2:04:32 - 2:04:32)

Qatar.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:33 - 2:04:33)

Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:35 - 2:04:49)

She says do you think that people are ready and willing to set aside time to be quiet each day? Is this possible in a global sense? Would anyone who thinks their life is fine be willing to waste time just sitting in order to raise their consciousness level?

[Speaker 1] (2:04:50 - 2:05:01)

Well, better I would change the question a little bit to make it more vital and more relevant is ask am I ready? The only question you really need to answer is am I ready?

[Speaker 2] (2:05:01 - 2:05:02)

Love that.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:02 - 2:05:09)

You don't need to know whether other people are ready to do it. Only you can have the answer am I ready to be still?

[Speaker 2] (2:05:09 - 2:05:12)

Very good, Mr. Tarr. Am I ready?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:13 - 2:05:30)

That's the vital question and only you can answer that. I can't answer that. Are you ready or are you so fascinated by the things of this world and your mind that perhaps you need to pursue those things for a few more years until you suffer a bit more and then you're ready?

[Speaker 2] (2:05:30 - 2:05:43)

Well yes, when we were doing rehearsal for this yesterday we were up on Skype and someone said I'm 28 years old and I don't think I need to be awakened so what can I get from this book? I go don't waste your time, go read another book.

[Speaker 1] (2:05:43 - 2:05:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:44 - 2:05:46)

You don't think you need to be awakened then?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:46 - 2:05:51)

No, that's right. So the time is not yet there for everybody and that's fine too.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:52 - 2:05:57)

What about the people who are struggling particularly in this first chapter with the book?

[Speaker 1] (2:05:58 - 2:07:16)

The first chapter is a little bit more conceptual than the other chapters and less practical. I wanted to give a general context for where the book fits into the general context of the spirituality on the planet, the transformation of consciousness on the planet. So just read through.

There are already very important pointers in the first chapter if you can see them that

will run through the whole book. Presence and so on. Just carry on not only the first chapter, anywhere in the book don't expect to immediately understand everything that's not necessary and besides understanding the book is not the essential thing, it's secondary.

The first thing is to experience the truth of it rather than conceptual understanding the essence of what's in the book but in any case cannot be understood conceptually. For example, presence. People say, can you explain to me what presence is?

I've already given a few pointers. It's pointless to go beyond that and give further definitions. You can only know what presence is by being present.

You must have at least a glimpse of presence and this is why it's not understanding that's the essence. So when you don't understand just read on. It's a process.

Reading this book is a process.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:17 - 2:07:26)

And this book as you say again as I said in the beginning this isn't about creating more information for you to believe in. And you don't want to be anybody's guru.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:27 - 2:08:04)

No, no. It's only it's not through your mind really that you can get it and anybody who finds this book meaningful and this is the important thing is already awakening. If you're not awakening already, this book will be completely meaningless or any other truly alive spiritual book will be meaningless.

You won't understand it or you say there's not much there. I don't know. It doesn't make sense to me.

If it does make sense and especially if you feel something from within responding and you say wow, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:04 - 2:08:21)

Well I think also too for all of you who've joined us there are a lot of people who are expressing they're getting it, they're awakening, they're feeling more alive and excited and then you want to go share it with somebody else who perhaps hasn't read the book, doesn't feel the same as you and then they feel frustrated.

[Speaker 9] (2:08:22 - 2:08:22)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:22 - 2:08:27)

And I guess you would say the same thing as you say to the woman in Qatar. Just worry about yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:28 - 2:08:30)

Yes. And so if others...

[Speaker 2] (2:08:30 - 2:08:30)

Concern yourself with yourself.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:31 - 2:08:52)

That's right. And if friends or relatives say it doesn't make sense to me, that's fine. Perhaps in a few years time they'll be ready.

We don't know. So it's to accept that it's not yet for everybody. Accept it first.

Accept. Accept. Don't demand that or don't make it into an ideology and then try to convince people that they must be present.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:52 - 2:10:03)

Right. I got it. Before we say goodbye, I want to thank you for being with me, all of you out there.

This is just the most exciting thing I have ever done. Being able to talk with you all and share this kind of information that allows all of us to get closer to who we really are so that we can do honor our life's purpose and calling here while we're on Earth. We'll be here next Monday again at 8 p.m. Central. If you want to experience this first class again or tell a friend who missed it, our webcast will be available on demand tomorrow for free here at Oprah.com. You'll also be able to update your workbook and get started on Chapter 2. And if you want to download the podcast of this class, you can do that too at Oprah.com and at iTunes. Next week, woo! Moving out of the conceptual Chapter 1 into the good stuff. Yes.

Moving on. The next week we'll be talking about the ego. Wow!

We'll see you next Monday night. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:03 - 2:10:03)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:03 - 2:10:12)

And thank you so much to all of you around the world. Good night. Good night.

Good morning. Bye-bye.